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**Dr. *MANNYNGHAM***

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**Religious Prudence.**

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Religious History

*Of Religious Prudence.*

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S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N

A T

*W H I T E - H A L L,*

On Sunday, Sept. 17. 1693.

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By Thomas Mannyngham, Rector of St. Andrew-Holborn, and Chaplain in Ordinary to  
*Their MAJESTIES.*

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Publish'd by Her Majesty's Special Command.

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L O N D O N,

Printed for William Crooke, at the Green Dragon  
without Temple-Barr, 1694.

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Prov. VIII. Verse 12. former part.

*I Wisdom dwell with Prudence.*

**A**Ltho' Wisdom be brought in by Solomon in this Chapter, speaking of her self, as a Person; and upon that account, many of the Ancients in their Interpretations, have understood it mystically of the Eternal Son of God, the Wisdom of the Father, from whom all true Wisdom is derived; yet according to the common Language, and general design of these Proverbial Writings, Wisdom stands for Religion, and Religion is express'd by the *Fear of God*.

Prudence is either Universal or Particular: Universal Prudence is the same with the Doctrine of Morality, the Application of the most proper means, viz. Vertuous Actions, towards the acquiring the chief End, the Happiness of Man: And Particular Prudence is distinguish'd by the different Objects and Ends about which it is conversant, and is the prosecution of any lawful Design by such Methods as shall appear to be best, upon a due Consideration of Circumstances.

That which is immediately signify'd by the Words of the Text, *I Wisdom dwell with Prudence*,  
is

is this, That there is an inseparable Connexion between Religion and Prudence; that one cannot be without the other; neither Religion without Prudence, nor Prudence without Religion.

One would think that this were so plain a Truth, that it could bear no enlargement, either for the illustrating or the Confirming of it: But he who considers what perverseness of Opinions obtains among Mankind, arising from the corruption of their Manners, and the immoderate love of present Life; will be ready to acknowledge, that there are those in the World, who frame to themselves a Notion of Prudence, which has no dependance upon Religion; and practise it without any regard to the Laws of Justice: And on the other side, whoever considers what an unaccountable awe Superstition imprints on the Minds and Consciences of some, and how often it happens that a Zeal without Knowledge passes for the height of Piety; will readily confess, that there are many who pretend to be very Devout, but they want that Prudence, which should justify their Actions, and adorn their Religion.

And now upon this view of things, my Text which asserts a necessary Connexion between Religion and Prudence, will bear an enlargement in these *Three* respects.

I. That

I. That there is no true Political Prudence, but what is founded upon Religion, or the Fear of God.

II. That the Pious Man is in the main, the truly Prudent and Judicious Person.

III. I shall shew, what great use there is of a particular Prudence in the Conduct of a Religious Life.

1. There is no true Political Prudence, but what is founded upon Religion, or the Fear of God.

God has deliver'd the World not only to the Enquiries and Disputations of Men, but in a great measure he has given them the Government of it too; reserving to himself a Power over Nature, and a Prerogative over all humane Counsels and Actions. We may study and observe those Laws of Motion which are imprinted on the Universe, as accurately and as nicely as we can; but we must not exclude the First Mover; who gave beginning to, and still sustains those Powers which we call Nature: We may likewise carry on our Publick Affairs and Private Business, by the exactest Rules of honest Management, and wise Dispatch; but then we must ascribe the success of all to the Providence of God, who overrules things into what Events he pleases, and  
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brings to pass his own Counsels by humane endeavours.

The first Corruption in Natural Philosophy consisted in the pretending to give an account of the World and its Original, without an infinite Understanding and First Mover : And the main Corruption of Prudence does consist in attempting the Government of the World by humane Policy, without a due submission to the Providence of God. But as the most ancient and best Philosophers never undertook to explain Nature without having recourse to an Infinite Spirit and Mind ; so we find in this Book of *Proverbs*, that the ancient Political Prudence was founded on the Fear of God : For so Wisdom speaks in this Chapter, *Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom : I am understanding, I have strength. By me Kings reign, and Princes decree justice. By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the earth*, Prov. VIII. 14, 15, 16.

Because, in the ordinary course of things, the general Influence of a Superior Being, is collected only by Reason and Inference ; and the particular working of Secondary Causes is conspicuous to Sense, and manifest to common Experience ; it often happens, that the proud Reasoners, and the sensual part of Mankind, either wholly deny a Providence, or attribute very little to its Superintendency

intendency and Power: But then these are the Persons whose Counsels are generally blasted, and who are often scatter'd in their own Imaginations: Tho' they prosper in some few Attempts, yet their main Design miscarries; and when the wise Ends of Providence are serv'd, their vain Projections are dash'd in pieces. We indeed are desirous of seeing these Disappointments of the Wicked much sooner than they commonly happen; but we forget how a Providential Dispensation usually takes a large circuit, and is not so soon finish'd as our Impatience would have it: In these Matters, we are to govern our Persuasions by what has already been done in other Ages, and if any thing appear very Irregular to us at present, we may be assur'd upon the confidence of former Events, that Divine Wisdom will bring it into its proper Channel again.

The Universal History of the World, and the Particular Histories of Kingdoms, and of some more Eminent Families, are full of the Tragical Ends of those proud Politicians, who thought to govern without God, and to be prudent without Religion: Their unjust Methods succeeded for some time, for the Punishment of a degenerate People, and then the Executioners themselves receiv'd the like Chastisement from another sett of

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prospering Sinners, who having scourg'd their Generation, fell at last under the same Indignation which they had measur'd to others.

The horrible Wickedness of Mankind seems to have made the permission of some sort of successive Tyranny, almost necessary in the World, from the ancient Times of *Nimrod*, through all the Four Great Monarchies: But the exceeding degeneracy of Christians, seems to have given occasion for the multiplying of that Evil, and for the erecting many Tyrannies in the World at one time: The Antichristian Polity, the *Turkish* Empire, and the *French* Ambition, do all contribute to the punishing of wicked Christians; for certainly 'tis our Impiety that is the principal Reason why these great Tyrannies are permitted in the World: Yet even *These* shall have their signal Judgments, their Devastations, and Decays; either a total Ruine, or a translation from one People to another, to make it evident, that the Providence of God is over all, and disposes things for the best Advantage of the World; that there may be a Dispensation of Temporal Calamities, for those Kingdoms which are otherwise incorrigible, who may be sure of Prosperity when they return to their Vertue again.

Most



Most of those Persons, who make use of unjust means, to free themselves from any present Distress, or to advance themselves to any Eminency in the World, besides the direct Impiety of their Hearts, have usually such poor and narrow minds, as cannot contemplate the Providence of God with any due extent of Thought; nor consider things with those Relations, and with those Consequences, in the viewing of which the Excellency of Man above other Creatures does consist, and the proper Wisdom of his Mind is display'd: And shall we allow those to be Prudent, who neither Reason nor Consider, who never weigh the Justice and Expediency of an Action, which depends upon Laws and Permissions; but run from every thing that displeases, and rush upon every thing that they fancy, without any respect to the Obligations of Honesty and Right? If to avoid what one dislikes, and to obtain what one desires, by any means whatever, were all that were requir'd in Prudence, then *common Instinct* might serve the Turn as well as Reason; for that supplies some Creatures with Tricks and Shifts enough to compass and effect their little Ends: But a *Natural Sagacity* is not sufficient for Man, who is accountable for his Actions, who must engage on no Designs but what are Ratio-

nal, nor pursue them by any means but what are Just and Lawful.

That Wisdom which degenerates into Craft, is but equivocally call'd Wisdom, 'tis really Folly, a mischievous, shifting, Artificial Folly; that conceals it self a-while, but throws off its disguise at last; that looks like wise and prosperous Management for some time, but ends in Ignominious Ruine. The Man of Integrity and Conscience needs no Arts of Dissimulation, the more he appears, the sooner is he trusted; and the more he depends on God and his own Sincerity, the better he succeeds. Tho' Honesty and true Prudence can never be really separated in the main Actions of Life, yet it is better to live without the *Opinion* of *Prudence*, than without that of *Honesty*; for do but separate the *Opinion* of *Integrity* from any one, and then the more Intellectual and Subtil he is, the more he is suspected and avoided; but Men will put a great Confidence in him, who has an honest Heart and a good Meaning, tho' he has not so large a reach of Understanding as the other: There is a Natural Presage that things will succeed well in the Hands of those who are Vertuous, that a Propitiousness will attend them in all their Undertakings, that what they want in Contrivance



vance will be made up by a Felicity of Event.

Whereas 'tis generally expected that Wickedness should befool the greatest Parts, give a check to the boldest Spirits, and blast the best Designs: Wherefore there is no surer way to Honour and Eminence, even in wicked Times, than to have a general Reputation of being a Person of true Piety and Conscience: He shall have the Favour of the People, and the Love of his Country, when the Man of Impiety and ill Morals, tho' never so extraordinary in other Respects, shall be secretly despis'd; and the Hypocrite, tho' never so close and specious for a while, shall be detected, and dismiss'd with Confusion.

An Uprightness of Action, a Constancy in Vertue, and unmovable Frame of Mind and Resolution, of always pursuing what is Just and Beneficial to the Publick, by right and laudable ways, is that which will make a Man Fortunate, or deserving to be so in the general Esteem of Mankind; 'twill make him truly Valuable, even without Riches or Titles; twill make him truly Great and Reverenc'd, and fit for the highest Trust, tho' he be not imploy'd: But, for the most part, 'tis the ready and direct Road to all the desirable things of this Life; Justice being  
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the surest Path to Greatness, honest Dealing the most probable way of growing Rich; and those being usually the most respected, and the most belov'd, who walk through this World, and its several Stages of Duty, in the plain Garb of Integrity and Truth.

To separate Political Prudence from Religion, is not only Impiety, but the extremity of Folly too: For, is Man able to over-rule the various Contingencies of this Life? Can he fix the Thoughts? Can he determine and point the Affections of others to his particular Designs? And yet a Concurrence of these is requir'd to every Event; and Mankind in all Ages were so sensible of this, that in their more considerable Undertakings, they always made an especial Application to some Superior Power: Liberty of Intention and Design, with the Care of Preparations, is all that Man can boast of; but the Success of Actions depends on Circumstances without his reach: Therefore Men were still desirous of knowing what was the *Divine Will*, as to those Affairs in which they were ready to engage. Many of the *Eastern Nations* attempted to read the *Will* of their Gods in the Stars and Constellations; the *Grecians* consulted their famous Oracles, and the *Romans* depended much upon their Auguries; but

but the Holy Scriptures are our standing Oracle, where God has deliver'd his Immutable Will, *that he will destroy the wisdom of the World, scatter the proud in the imagination of their Hearts; and though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet Solomon assures us as of the Decree of God, that it shall be well with them that fear the Lord, Eccles. 8. 12.*

2. I shall endeavour to shew, that the Pious Person in the main is the truly Judicious.

If we would speak according to the Accuracy of Moral Writers, Wisdom is the Knowledge of things Great, Admirable, and Divine, whereby the Mind is rais'd and enlarg'd into delightful Contemplations; and Prudence is a right Practical Judgment, or the Skill of judging what we are to do, and what not, and of distinguishing between Good and Evil, and the degrees of each: And tho' Prudence in the common acceptance of the World, passes now for any Cunning Contrivance, for any dextrous Management of an Affair, whatever means are us'd; yet the ancient Moralists never allow'd a wicked Man to be call'd Prudent: They readily grant, that such an one may have a subtilty of Judgment, and an acuteness in speculative Studies, and that he may be well skill'd in all the Myste-  
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ries of Craft ; but they unanimously declare, that a wicked Life corrupts the very Principles of true Prudence, and right Reason ; which cannot dwell with Passions, and irregular Desires.

Prudence is that Vertue or Power of the Soul, whereby the Mind deliberates rightly, and finds out what is best to be done, when all things are consider'd ; or, it helps us to discover what are the best Means for obtaining a Good End : Now 'tis Religion that qualifies the Mind to consider Practical Matters in their true Nature and Consequences ; that purifies the Intention, corrects the Inclinations, moderates the Affections, and makes our Deliberations calm and wise : 'Tis the Fear of God that sets Bounds to Prudence, that shews how far we are to act in any Undertaking, and where we are to resign things up to a higher Conduct : 'Tis Temperance that gives us an Intellectual Vigor, that makes us Masters of our Reason, that presents a clear Prospect to the Eyes of Wisdom, void of all the Mists and Colours of Fancy ; and frees our Thoughts from the Contagion of our Temper : 'Tis the Consideration of another Life, that cools our Desires after this ; and makes us content to let the Advantages of this World alone, if they cannot be acquir'd without Sin, which is the certain destruction

struction of our best and highest Interests: These and such-like Vertues are the Pre-requisites, or the Ingredients of all true Prudence; and therefore 'tis the *Pious* Man, that in the main is the truly *Judicious* Person.

But then, does not this sound like an uncommon Assertion? And is it not often made an ordinary Objection, that such an One is very Good and Vertuous, but he is very Imprudent, and wants a Knowledge of Men and Business? But yet, if Religion be the highest Prudence, as has been already prov'd, then this Assertion must still hold, That the truly *Pious* Man in the main is, the truly *Judicious* Person; and the mistake of the World must lie in this; That either their Imprudent Person is not truly *Pious*, but rather Enthusiastick, or Superstitious, or intemperately Zealous, or the like; or, else they vainly conceive that there is no true Prudence, but that which tends to make Men Rich and Great in this World, by any Means, and by any Arts whatever: Now this is so far from being any part of Prudence, that 'tis the very Principle which the Scriptures brand as Folly in the highest degree; such Folly, as does not only signify the Weakness of the Judgment, but the Malignity of the Will; which is not bare Imprudence, but gross Sin and Vice.

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There is indeed a very low sort of Prudence, which does consist in being mighty sedulous and diligent in getting of Wealth, and raising a Fortune, by such ways as are not unjust in the account of humane Laws, tho' not so becoming a Christian, who is to make the Concerns of another World his principal Care and Business: But why should the heaping up of Riches be look'd upon as the main Evidence and mark of Mens Prudence? Surely there is much more Discretion requir'd in using of them temperately, and disposing of them wisely to Charitable uses; and in making them a foundation of present Comfort, and future Rewards: Why is not the discreet Management of a narrow Fortune, as clear a sign of Prudence, as the getting a large and ample one? And why is not a good Reputation an excellent Purchase, as well as a good Estate? The Prudence of this World is made a Pattern in the Gospel for Christians to imitate in their pursuit after the Happiness of the next, but as to its own Nature it is always rejected and condemn'd: We may borrow something of its Caution and Wariness in times of Persecution and Danger, but never make use of its base Designs, or of its unjust and unworthy Methods.

The best way of coming to Riches, and Honour, and of obtaining the Advantages of this Life;



Life, is the being very diligent in procuring the Favour of Him who is the giver of every good and perfect Gift: And then the Prudence which concerns us in this case, is a faithful and diligent acting in that Station that is appointed us, with a due Subordination to God and his Laws; the keeping up a continual succession of Industry and Prayer, which will be sure to carry us discreetly through all the necessary Business of Life; and either make us successful in what we undertake, or support us under disappointments; affording us this constant satisfaction, that tho' our particular Designs do not always prosper, yet our general Desires are always accomplish'd in the good Providence of God.

'Tis a very imperfect Notion of Prudence, to think that it consists in an exact Knowledge of the World, or in getting a large share and possession of it: I should rather define it, a discreet contempt of this World, and an earnest seeking after such good things as are real and lasting, as are perfective of our Nature, and more within our Power, than those, which we call the Goods of Fortune, are. An exact Knowledge in Business, and a long Experience in the Affairs of humane Life, contribute much to true Prudence, when there is a Religious Principle at the bottom, and

a sober and temperate Mind to make a good use of that Knowledge ; but otherwise it only supplies Men with a more pernicious Craft, and enables them to lay their Frauds the deeper. That part of Prudence which serves to keep a Man from being cheated by others, may be best learn'd by observing the general Falseness of the World ; but that which will preserve him from being cheated by himself, by his own vain Reasonings, and foolish Passions ; is the looking into his own Heart, and taking a full view of the deceitfulness of that little World ; it is the guarding himself from the Illusions of his sensual Nature, and the purging his Soul from those defilements, which put false Colours upon the Mind ; that it cannot discern its truest Interest.

Let the Understanding be clear, the Reason sober, the Will orderly, and the Passions governable ; and then what will there be wanting to make that Man Prudent ? Nothing surely, besides a thorough Acquaintance with, and an actual Consideration of the particular Business which shall at any time be laid before him.

They who are subject to an excessive heat and impetuosity of Temper, or are much given to contemplative and abstracted Studies, are not generally thought very proper to be employ'd in  
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Publick Affairs, tho' they be Persons of a good Life and Meaning : But then, let not Religion be blam'd for those Defects which are no ways owing to Religion, or which arise from the affectation of some *Nicenesses*, which Religion does not require : It must be confess'd, that much Retirement, and deep Devotion, will bring some good Men to such an exceeding tenderness of Conscience in all their *Civil* as well as Religious Actions ; as Men who are more exercis'd in the World, and more inur'd to Publick Affairs, will be apt to Censure as an imprudent, and unnecessary scrupulousness of Mind : And on the other side, it must be acknowledg'd, That a Nation may come to be so generally corrupted, and so divided by Interests and Parties, that a Man shall be hard put to it, to keep his Integrity, and his Publick Station together : And when things shall at any time come to this desperate State, it will be impossible for the Man of Conscience, and the Man of Politicks, to agree in their Notion of Prudence.

It is certain, That we are first to serve God, to seek his Kingdom and Righteousness ; and then to secure our Just Interests in this World : But when our Civil Interests about which we are concern'd, are such, as immediately respect the Peace and Quiet of Government, and are so important  
a Care,

a Care, that the very exercise and establishment of our Religion depends upon it, then Prudence may be allow'd to act in a greater Latitude, and still be within the bounds of Justice; and the necessary Welfare of a Nation will require some larger measures of Compliance in extraordinary Cases, which yet shall be no ways injurious to Religion and a good Conscience. A firmness of Soul, a solidity of Judgment, and a fix'd Resolution in Vertue, are rare and Noble Qualities; but a very timorous and scrupulous Mind is an Imperfection in any one, but chiefly in such as sustain a Publick Character, and are oblig'd to act for the greatest Good and Welfare of *others*; 'tis an Infirmary that breeds Delays, that loses the opportunity of Action, that makes Men inconsistent with their own Counsels, dubious and inconstant in all their Undertakings; and Inconstancy does sometimes as much mischief to the Publick, as Ignorance and Malice; it likewise tempts many to speak reproachful things of Probity and Religion it self, and to call in question the Prudence of those, whose private Vertues are most deservedly in great esteem. And so I come to the

III. Thing propos'd, *viz.* To speak something concerning that Particular Prudence which is requir'd in the Conduct of a Religious Life.

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No Pious Person can be suppos'd to be without that which we call Moral Prudence, for that belongs to the Essence of Vertue, and runs through every Duty ; but, besides this, there are other things requir'd to make a Man perfect and compleat in Prudence ; such as good Natural Parts, liberal Education, much Experience, wise Conversation, and an application to those of greater Ability than our selves : Some of which, are matter of Advice and Counsel, such as the conversing with Men of great Knowledge, and excellent Temper ; and the applying our selves to those who are eminent for Wisdom and Vertue. Others are occasional Advantages, or a Providential Felicity ; such as good Natural Parts, and liberal Education, and much Experience in the World.

Now as it is not indispensably necessary for every one to be Vertuous in the very same measure and degree ; much less is it absolutely requir'd, that every Religious Person should be Prudent to just such an extent : That which is our direct Duty in respect to this and all other excellent Attainments, is to use our best Endeavours to acquire them ; and the higher we advance in the Rational and Spiritual Nature, the more happy and secure we are.

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There may be much Imprudence mingled with an honest Simplicity of Mind, with an humble Piety, and an hearty Desire of doing good ; but then, that Imprudence is in small matters, and not in such things as belong to the substance of Duty ; for I cannot conceive how a truly Religious Person can be to seek in any of the real Parts and Instances of Vertue ; in some particular Decencies of it he may : If he has not the Natural Blessing of a clear Understanding, yet if he has the Humility of a good Christian, that will direct him in *many* Cases to make his application to those, who have that larger measure of Prudence which he wants : And if this were duly practis'd, what a multitude of Irregularities in Religion might be prevented, which take their rise from an Imprudent Zeal ? A Pious Temper is the first thing we are to labour after, and a Prudent Mind is the next ; by the first we are sincerely dispos'd to do all the Good we can ; and by the other we are enabled to judge when, and where, and by what means that Good is to be done ; how every Duty may be best perform'd, how seasonably, and in its time, and how consistent with other Obligations which must not be neglected.

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When sensual and selfish Principles are laid aside, the Mind purifi'd, the Passions in subjection, and the Glory of God unfeignedly design'd in all our Actions; where there is no spiritual Pride, no vain affectation of seeming more than ordinary scrupulous even about indifferent Matters; but an humble, modest, and careful progress in Duty; there Religious Prudence is never wanting: which is a sagacity of discerning not only the great differences of Good and Evil, but the various degrees of Goodness, and the peculiar seasons of Pious Actions: For there is a *particular Prudence* which ought to accompany every Duty, which gives it a proper grace and beauty, makes it appear so commendable and lovely in the Eyes of all who behold it, that they who will not practise it, know not how to condemn it. Sermons, and Pious Conferences; Cases of Conscience, and Books of Spiritual Wisdom, do all contribute towards the Improving of People in this particular Religious Prudence; which being so large and comprehensive a subject, I shall not undertake to discourse it fully at the latter end of a Sermon, but only lay down *Three or Four* Rules for the more prudent Conduct of a Religious Life.

1. The first Rule is this: Not to engage in things which are above our Sphere. Most People

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have a strange affectation of being Publick Persons before they are call'd to it; they will not rest contented with a private and modest Piety, but love to do something that is extraordinary, as they think, that they may be observ'd and talk'd of: Tho' Providence has plac'd them in that state, wherein their Eminency is to be shewn by their Obedience, yet they are impatient to censure things which are not of their Level, and were never intended for their Examination: They think they do not answer the strong Impulse of their Religion, unless they oppose their Zeal without Knowledge against such Matters as are wholly Prudential. You are willing to do Good, but must you go out of your Bounds to do it? You would give faithful Counsel and Advice, but why must it be immediately directed to your Governors? Are not the Miscarriages of your own Family, or of your Neighbourhood, a more proper Subject for your Animadversions? Or, are you sure, that your own Innocence will give you the Authority? Or, that your own Defects will allow you the leisure of Correcting others? You are desirous of bettering many things which you think amiss; but must you remove things, which have been found Good upon long trial, to make way for your Imaginations?



tions ? You would uphold the tottering Ark, but must you thrust out a prophane Hand to support it ? You would have more Purity in Divine Worship, but must you make a Schism to obtain it ?

2. If Men would be Prudently Religious, they must not presently catch at Perfection, and the highest Instances of Piety. There is an order of Duties, and a gradual advancement in Religion : They who affect Sublimities, before they are establish'd in Humility, will never come to any strength and consistency in Vertue ; and will bring but little Honour to the Profession of the Gospel. What mad work do those poor Enthusiasts make in Religion, who are altogether for the Raptures of Divine Love and Contemplation, before they have mortifi'd their Affections and Lusts ; who pretend to the greatest Perfection, when they want the first Rudiments of Moral Vertue ; and think themselves highly advanc'd in Spiritual Wisdom, when they are not so much as under the Conduct of common Prudence ?

3. If we would be Prudently Religious, we must never engage too vehemently in things of an indifferent Nature. There are substantial Duties enough to take up all the fervour and vivacity of our Zeal, without wasting its force in

things of a low concern: Humility, Meekness, Self-denial, and Prayer, are Duties for all to practise, and require our utmost application and vigor; but those things which are only contingently Good, and have no real excellency in their own Natures, require but a moderate regard: And 'tis the chief act and imployment of Prudence, to judge rightly of the different value of things, and to proportion our concern to the degrees of Goodness, and the measures of Expediency.

4. Let us take care that we do not spoil a good constitution of Soul, by any superstitious Fancies, or unnecessary scruples of Conscience. When we plainly perceive that we are sincerely Religious, and that we have a clear Integrity of Heart; let us not cloud it by melancholly Surmises: When our Conscience is right and sound, let us not physick it too much, by needless and perplexing Doubts and Questions, lest we make it too weak and timorous, and unserviceable for those noble and rational Ends for which it was design'd.

All Imprudencies in Religion are not Sins, but they are Infirmities; they take off the Lustre of Vertuous Actions, and so diminish the Glory of Religion; they make People in many respects, uncomfortable to themselves, and unprofitable to others;



others; and next to the Purity of the Heart, there is nothing that can be compar'd to the Prudence of the Mind; which I am perswaded many may obtain, by half that Pains which they take to be Rich and Wealthy. And is it not a plain argument of an exceeding degeneracy of Manners, when that viler sort of worldly Prudence, of which the duller part of Mankind are most capable, shall be generally preferr'd, before that excellent Prudence of which I have now discours'd? By which the Throne is establish'd; and on the account of which, they who stand about it, shine with true and solid Honours: Which is the best Ornament of all our Religious Actions, and the truest Splendor of Humane Life.

To conclude; when Men have wearied themselves in crooked ways, they will acknowledge, That tho' Irreligion gives a larger scope of wandering, yet Piety keeps them in the right, the safe, and pleasant Path; when they have fully accomplish'd themselves with the studies of History, Policy, Laws, of the various Humours of Mankind, and the most refined Reasons of State; they will find at last that the Christian Vertues are the only Arts of Prudence: That Resolution, Constancy, and Fidelity, with the the fear of God, will make them esteem'd in  
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all Governments; give them a Height and Magnanimity of Wisdom superiour to all the base designs of private Interest, popular Faction, and a false Greatness: They will find, that 'tis Religion which perfects the political Man, which gives a due largeness to his Understanding, justice to his Designs, calmness to his Counsels, an even Temper under all Events, and a Vertuous Constancy under all the Reproaches and Violences of the Wicked and unruly; which generally brings him to great Honours in this Life, but will infallibly Crown his Wisdom with Everlasting Glory in the World to come.

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